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BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)

Democratic Republic of the Congo – Complex Emergency

Situation Report #1, Fiscal Year (FY) 2008

February 19, 2008

Note: The last situation report was dated September 28, 2007.

BACKGROUND

Since 1998, regional armed conflict across the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has resulted in an estimated 5.4 million deaths, according to a January 2008 report by the non-governmental organization (NGO) International Rescue Committee (IRC). Most deaths were due to indirect consequences of fighting, such as disease, malnutrition, and neonatal- and pregnancy-related complications. Overall, the decade of fighting has displaced more than 3 million Congolese across eastern and southern Congo and hindered access to agricultural land and traditional markets. Poverty continues to be widespread, and the Congolese health care system has eroded due to a lack of resources and looting of medical assets.

The 1999 Lusaka Peace Accords laid the foundation for the formation of a transitional government in 2003, the adoption of a new constitution in 2005, and national and local elections in 2006. However, armed groups such as the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR)/ex-Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR)/Interahamwe,¹ Mai-Mai factions,² and dissident troops in the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) led by renegade General Laurent Nkunda³ continue to create areas of insecurity in eastern DRC. In 2007, large numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) across DRC returned to areas of origin while other communities were facing new displacement. The U.N. Mission in the DRC (MONUC), established in February 2000, has become the largest U.N. peacekeeping operation in the world and continues to support the peace.

On October 9, 2007, U.S. Chargé d’Affairs Samuel V. Brock redeclared a disaster due to the ongoing complex emergency in the DRC. Since 1999, the U.S. Government (USG) has provided more than \$741 million to support life-saving humanitarian activities in the DRC.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE		SOURCE
IDPs from North Kivu Crisis	788,070	OCHA ⁴ – December 31, 2007
Total IDPs in DRC	1,312,368	OCHA – December 31, 2007
Refugees	302,489	UNHCR ⁵ – February 5, 2008
Total Number of Deaths since 1998	5,400,000	IRC – January 2008

FY 2008 HUMANITARIAN FUNDING

USAID/OFDA Assistance to DRC.....	\$5,705,111
USAID/FFP ⁶ Assistance to DRC	\$31,953,100
State/PRM ⁷ Assistance to DRC	\$1,000,000
Total USAID and State Humanitarian Assistance to DRC.....	\$38,658,211

CURRENT SITUATION

In 2007, humanitarian organizations helped approximately 1.5 million displaced Congolese return to areas of origin in the DRC’s North Kivu, South Kivu, Katanga, and Orientale provinces, according to OCHA. While returns are overall outpacing new displacements, OCHA estimated that North Kivu Province still has approximately 800,000 IDPs, South Kivu Province hosts

more than 357,000 IDPs, and Orientale Province’s Ituri District has an estimated 140,000 IDPs.

Kivu Crisis

North Kivu continues to be the most volatile province, according to OCHA. Since August 2007, approximately 232,000 Congolese have fled their homes due to insecurity and violence.

¹ Rwandans implicated in the 1994 genocide who subsequently fled to eastern DRC

² Groups of local DRC citizens originally formed to resist Rwandan army occupation

³ Dissident troops led by General Nkunda, a former commander in the Rwandan-backed Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD)

⁴ U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

⁵ Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

⁶ USAID’s Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP)

⁷ U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM)

Insecurity in North and South Kivu generated major humanitarian needs in 2007. Most significantly, security deteriorated in North Kivu due to the failed integration of former armed opposition groups into FARDC brigades. Since late 2006, dissident General Nkunda has consolidated power, attacking FDLR elements and resisting FARDC authority. In October and November 2007, a lull in major combat across most of North Kivu Province afforded relief organizations temporary access to conflict-affected areas to assess humanitarian conditions and deliver critical food and emergency relief supplies for displaced and vulnerable populations.

Ongoing population movements, a fluid security environment, and difficult or unreliable access throughout much of Masisi and Rutshuru territories remain significant challenges for emergency relief efforts for the 437,000 people displaced by fighting in these areas since late 2006. According to the U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa, U.N. agencies are working to target assistance to priority locations and populations through coordinated convoys and activities.

Incidents of violence between fighters loyal to renegade General Laurent Nkunda and the Pareco Mai Mai occurred following the signing of a ceasefire agreement between the Government of the DRC and the armed movements on January 23, 2008. Nevertheless, the humanitarian community is cautiously optimistic that the agreement, which calls for an immediate end to armed conflict, gradual troop withdrawals, disarmament of militias, and return of displaced populations, may allow for a gradual restoration of peace in North Kivu. USAID/AFR provided \$300,000 in FY 2007 funding to support the conference that led to the ceasefire agreement. In FY 2008, USAID is providing more than \$37 million in emergency assistance, including more than \$5.7 million through USAID/OFDA, to address the immediate humanitarian needs of more than 1 million conflict-affected Congolese.

Protection

According to OCHA, rates of forced child-recruitment into armed militias and incidents of sexual violence are rising across North Kivu. To improve the capacity of the local community and health organizations to provide adequate care to populations affected by sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), USAID/OFDA is supporting the International Medical Corps' (IMC's) emergency response program in Goma Territory, North Kivu Province, with nearly \$274,000 to meet the needs of approximately 125,000 people. In North Kivu's Rutshuru Territory, USAID/OFDA-partner MERLIN is implementing SGBV prevention and treatment activities, reaching approximately 60,000 people.

Agriculture and Food Security

Food security remains a critical challenge throughout DRC. Returning populations face a lack of agricultural

inputs, limited knowledge of land use, and restricted access to markets. In a January 15, 2008 report, OCHA noted that in certain areas of North Kivu, global acute malnutrition rates had reached 17 percent—surpassing the internationally recognized emergency threshold of 15 percent. To improve household food security, USAID/OFDA is providing nearly \$600,000 to the NGO Première Urgence to implement cash-for-work activities in Birambizo Health Zone in North Kivu's Rutshuru Territory. The program will increase the ability of more than 70,000 people to purchase seeds and tools. In addition, USAID/FFP is providing 24,220 metric tons (MT) of P.L. 480 Title II emergency food assistance to meet the food needs of conflict-affected persons throughout eastern DRC. In total, USAID/FFP FY 2008 assistance is valued at nearly \$32 million.

Health

In 2007, access to primary health care remained a challenge in areas of eastern DRC. Relief agencies are working to address common diseases and health risks through prevention activities and vaccination campaigns. However, a lack of local capacity and access to vast areas of affected regions hinders reliable access to medical services and the provision of basic health care.

In FY 2008, USAID/OFDA is supporting four NGOs to implement health programs addressing the needs of the most vulnerable populations in North Kivu Province. Through Handicap International, USAID/OFDA is supporting the rehabilitation of the General Referral Hospital of Virunga in Goma. In two health zones, USAID/OFDA-partner IMC is increasing the access to health services of an estimated 500,000 beneficiaries, including reproductive health. In Rwanguba Health Zone, North Kivu Province, IRC is also increasing access for approximately 110,000 people to affordable, curative and preventative primary, secondary, and reproductive health care services, while MERLIN is implementing a similar program in Rutshuru Territory.

In late 2004, USAID/OFDA met with health partners to begin transitioning health zones from emergency to development funding through USAID/Kinshasa. Participants in the meeting established minimum requirements to prepare a health zone for the transition to development, including capacity to maintain a cold chain, order essential medicines, and account for expenditures. With the exception of a few insecure areas, most health zones have now completed the transition to development programs.

Refugee Returns

State/PRM continues to support the return of Congolese refugees to areas previously affected by widespread displacement. To date in FY 2008, State/PRM has provided \$1 million for livelihood restoration programs benefiting returning refugees in Katanga Province.

USAID AND STATE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO DRC

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE¹			
Handicap International	Health	Goma Territory, North Kivu Province	\$416,494
IMC	Health, WASH, Nutrition, and Protection	Rutshuru, Masisi and Goma Territories, North Kivu Province	\$2,070,203
IRC	Health and WASH	Rutshuru Territory, North Kivu Province	\$500,000
Merlin	Health, WASH, Nutrition, and Protection	Rutshuru Territory, North Kivu Province	\$842,953
Première Urgence	Agriculture and Food Security	Rutshuru Territory, North Kivu Province	\$580,126
UNHCR	Shelter and Settlements	North Kivu Province	\$1,000,000
	Administrative Support	Countrywide	\$295,335
TOTAL USAID/OFDA			\$5,705,111
USAID/FFP ASSISTANCE²			
U.N. World Food Program (WFP)	24,220 MT of P.L. 480 Title II emergency food assistance	Eastern DRC	\$31,953,100
TOTAL USAID/FFP			\$31,953,100
STATE/PRM ASSISTANCE			
ACTED	Livelihoods Programs in areas of return	Katanga Province	\$1,000,000
TOTAL STATE/PRM			\$1,000,000
TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO DRC IN FY 2008			\$37,658,211
TOTAL USAID AND STATE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO DRC IN FY 2008			\$38,658,211

¹ USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of February 19, 2008² Estimated value of food assistance.


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